

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, FR
SUBJECT: GISCARD DEFINES THE "RIGHT CHOICE"
FOR FRANCE

1. SUMMARY: IN HIS SPEECH AT VERDUN-SUR-LE-DOUBS,
JANUARY 27, GISCARD PRESENTED THE FOUR CRITERIA BY
WHICH FRENCH VOTERS SHOULD DETERMINE THEIR VOTE NEXT
MARCH. AIMING HIS REMARKS AT THE HESITANT, UNDECIDED
VOTE, GISCARD STATED THAT THE RIGHT CHOICE WAS DIC-
TATED BY COMMON SENSE:

(A) THE RESTRUCTURING OF FRANCE'S ECONOMY MUST BE
ACCOMPLISHED.

(B) FRANCE MUST BE GOVERNED.

(C) FRANCE MUST ADVANCE TOWARD UNITY AND JUSTICE.

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(D) FRANCE'S INTERNATIONAL ROLE MUST BE MAINTAINED.

IN EFFECT, GISCARD STATED THE PRESENT GOVERNING
COALITION HAD MET THESE CRITERIA; A DIVIDED LEFT
OPPOSITION PROPOSING A COLLECTIVIST COMMON PROGRAM
COULD NOT. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD
BE BOUND BY THE VOTERS' DECISION AND THEY SHOULD BE

PREPARED TO SEE THE COMMON PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED IF THE LEFT WERE VOTED IN. HE CALLED ON THE FRENCH VOTER TO SUPPORT HIM IN HIS ATTEMPT TO BRING ABOUT UNITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, BY ELECTING CANDIDATES WILLING TO WORK TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF FRANCE INSTEAD OF TRYING TO SPLIT IT. AND ABOVE ALL, GISCARD EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR THE VOTER TO THINK ABOUT FRANCE AND TO VOTE FOR WHAT WAS BEST FOR IT RATHER THAN FOR WHOEVER PROMISED HIM THE MOST. END SUMMARY.

2. A LOGICAL CHOICE - IT IS A PRINCIPLE OF LOGIC THAT IF YOU GRANT THE PREMISES AND THE STATEMENT IS LOGICAL, THEN YOU CANNOT DENY THE CONCLUSION. THIS WAS THE BASIC APPROACH TAKEN BY PRESIDENT GISCARD IN HIS PRESENTATION OF THE CRITERIA FOR FRENCHMEN TO EXAMINE BEFORE CASTING THEIR VOTES IN THE ELECTIONS NEXT MARCH. TAKING THE HIGH ROAD AS PRESIDENT OF FRANCE, GISCARD SPOKE OF FRANCE'S REQUIREMENTS. FIRST, HER ECONOMY MUST BE RESTRUCTURED TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF A CHANGING BUT INTERDEPENDENT WORLD ECONOMY. SECOND, AS NEITHER OF THE FOUR POLITICAL GROUPINGS IN FRANCE IS SUPPORTED BY MORE THAN 30 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION, FRANCE MUST HAVE A COALITION GOVERNMENT CAPABLE OF GOVERNING TOGETHER. THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNING COALITION HAS MET THESE REQUIREMENTS IS DEMONSTRATED BY THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE GOVERNED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS AND THAT FRANCE IS BEGINNING TO EMERGE FROM THE ECONOMIC CRISIS. THAT THE OPPOSITION CANNOT MEET THESE CONDITIONS, GISCARD CONTINUED, IS DEMONSTRATED BY THEIR PROPOSED "COMMON PROGRAM" BASED ON A COLLECTIVIST PHILOSOPHY WHICH WOULD SUBSTANTIALLY DECREASE FRANCE'S ABILITY TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF AN INTERDEPENDENT WORLD ECONOMY AND BY THE LEFT'S INABILITY TO UNEQUIVOCALLY STATE THAT THEY WILL FORM A COALITION GOVERNMENT AFTER THE ELECTIONS AND UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS. IF THE VOTERS CHOOSE THE OPPOSITION, THEY SHOULD BE FULLY AWARE OF AND PREPARED TO TAKE THE CONSEQUENCES.

3. UNITY, JUSTICE AND SELF-RESPECT - BUILDING ON THE LOGIC OF THE RIGHT CHOICE, GISCARD STRESSED HIS AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEMS FACED BY THE FRENCH PEOPLE AND HIS INTENT TO RESPOND TO THEM BY INCORPORATING INTO THE GOVERNMENT AS BROAD A REPRESENTATION OF THE FRENCH PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE (ENLARGING THE MAJORITY) TO WORK TOGETHER TOWARD FRANCE'S NATIONAL GOALS OF UNITY AND JUSTICE. AS A FINAL POINT, IN AN APPEAL TO FRENCH PRIDE -- GISCARD STRESSED THAT UNITED AND

STEADFAST IN THEIR EFFORTS, FRANCE STANDS RESPECTED
AMONG THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD. DIVIDED, GULLIBLE

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AND MISLED, SHE WILL FALL FROM POWER AND PRIDE
AS IN THE DEBACLE OF 1939-40. AS THE PRESIDENT
OF A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY, GISCARD COULD NOT DICTATE
THEIR CHOICE, BUT HE SAID HE WOULD NOT LET THEM BE
MISLED.

4. THIS LINE OF REASONING WITHOUT DIRECT REFERENCE
TO GAULLISTS, GISCARDIANS, OR SOCIALISTS, AND ONLY
DIRECTLY ATTACKING THE COMMUNISTS ON THE POINT OF
COLLECTIVISM, WAS THE THESIS OF GISCARD'S SPEECH.
BY BRINGING THE NATIONAL INTEREST AS VIEWED FROM
THE PRESIDENCY INTO AN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN WHICH HAS
THUS FAR RESEMBLED LITTLE MORE THAN A COMPETITION
BETWEEN ACTS IN A POLITICAL CIRCUS AND DEFINING THE
FRAME OF REFERENCE FOR CHOICE IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO
ACCENTUATE THE WEAKNESS OF ONE OF THE ALTERNATIVES,
GISCARD MADE A STRONG STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE
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PRESENT GOVERNING COALITION WHILE KEEPING SOME POLITICAL DISTANCE FROM THEM AND HIS OPTIONS OPEN FOR ENLARGING THE PRESENT GOVERNING COALITION AFTER THE ELECTIONS.

5. UNITY - THE HEART OF GISCARD'S SPEECH LAY IN HIS APPEAL FOR UNITY. CITING THE DOMESTIC PROBLEMS OF CONCERN TO FRENCHMEN, FRANCE'S RELATIVE POSITION IN THE WORLD TODAY, GISCARD EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR SOLIDARITY AND THAT HE EXTENDED HIS HAND TO ALL POLITICAL LEADERS. THE APPLICATION OF THE COMMON PROGRAM, HE WARNED, WOULD CREATE PROFOUND DIVISIONS IN FRENCH SOCIETY AND REKINDLE OLD ANIMOSITIES. HE CALLED ON THE FRENCH PEOPLE TO SUPPORT HIS EFFORT TOWARD NATIONAL UNITY BY TELLING THE CANDIDATES THAT THE MAJORITY MUST NOT BE BASED ON REJECTION BUT ON POSITIVE ACTION TOWARD UNITY AND ACHIEVING NATIONAL GOALS. IN EFFECT, HE APPEALED TO THE VOTERS TO PROVIDE HIM WITH A NATIONAL ASSEMBLY THAT WOULD SUPPORT HIS EFFORT TO BRING THE POLITICAL PARTIES TOGETHER, ENLARGING "THE MAJORITY". IF THE LEFT WON, HOWEVER, HE WOULD REMAIN AS PRESIDENT, ABIDE BY THE PEOPLE'S DECISION AND NOT OBSTRUCT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON PROGRAM.

6. REACTIONS: REACTIONS FROM THE LEFT WERE PREDICTABLE. MITTERRAND, PS LEADER, STATED THAT HE NEVER DOUBTED THAT GISCARD WOULD ABIDE BY THE DECISION OF THE PEOPLE. HE ONLY REGRETTED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD ASSUMED A POLITICAL ROLE WHICH COULD MAKE HIM THE LEADER OF THE MINORITY IN THE GOVERNMENT INSTEAD OF AN ARBITER. FABRE, LEADER OF THE MRG, EXPRESSED HIS DISAPPOINTMENT WITH GISCARD'S

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BLANKET CONDEMNATION OF THE COMMON PROGRAM WHICH THE MRG SUPPORTS AS A SERIOUS PROGRAM FOR REFORM, AND WITH GISCARD'S ASSERTION THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNING COALITION WAS THE ONLY SOLUTION FOR THE FUTURE. MARCHAIS, PC LEADER, RESPONDED THAT THE COMMON PROGRAM WOULD RESPOND TO FRANCE'S ECONOMIC NEEDS, AND THE PC AND PS COULD GOVERN TOGETHER. THEREFORE THE LEFT FULFILLED GISCARD'S CRITERIA. THE SOCIALIST NEWSLETTER STATED THAT IT WAS AGAIN NECESSARY TO REMIND THE PRESIDENT (AND OTHERS) THAT

FRANCE WAS NOT THEIR EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY AND THAT FRENCHMEN WHO DISAGREED WITH THEM ARE NO LESS FRENCH THAN THEY ARE. ON THE GOVERNMENT SIDE, THE GISCARDIANS AND THE CENTRISTS FULLY SUPPORTED GISCARD'S SPEECH. CHIRAC, LEADER OF THE RPR, EXPRESSED HIS SATISFACTION WITH THE PRESIDENT'S ACTIVE ROLE IN SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT COALITION - ITS PAST AND ITS FUTURE.

7. COMMENT: THE SPEECH WAS GISCARD AT HIS BEST - CLEAR, INTELLECTUAL, CAMPAIGNING FOR HIS IDEAL FOR FRANCE. WHILE RESPONDING TO CHIRAC'S CALL FOR HIM TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE, GISCARD STILL TRIED TO REMAIN SOMEWHAT LESS INVOLVED IN THE CAMPAIGN THAN A "MAJORITY POLITICIAN" WOULD BE. IF THE PRESENT GOVERNING COALITION WINS, HE CAN CLAIM A HAND IN THE VICTORY. IF IT LOSES, HE WILL REMAIN AT HIS POST TO DEFEND THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE 5TH REPUBLIC (ALTHOUGH COHABITATION WITH THE LEFT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT) AND IF NECESSARY EXERCISE HIS PRESIDENTIAL PREROGATIVE TO DISSOLVE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.
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